

Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment
March 2004
Executive Summary

The 2004 New Jersey Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA) consisted of three sections: Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science. The GEPA is to be used as a primary indicator for identifying those students who may need instructional intervention in the three content areas. It is designed to give an indication of the progress students are making in mastering the skills they will need to pass the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA).

The total GEPA Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science scores are reported as scale scores with a range of 100 to 300. Please note that 100 and 300 are a theoretical floor and ceiling, which may not actually be observed. The score ranges are as follows:

Advanced Proficient	250-300
Proficient	200-249
Partially Proficient	100-199

Students who scored Partially Proficient are considered to be below the state minimum level of proficiency. These students may need additional instructional support such as individual or programmatic intervention. It is important that districts consider multiple measures with all students before making the final decisions about students' instructional placement.

The Statewide Performance by Demographic Groups Report shows enrollment and performance data for various demographic groups in New Jersey. For each demographic group, the number of students participating, the percent of students in each proficiency level, and the mean scale score are reported for each content area.

Students are counted in the "Total Students" category only once, but are counted in other categories that apply. The report groups students by instructional groups, gender, migrant status, economic status, and ethnicity. Students may be counted in as many ethnicities as they grid on their answer documents. The demographic information originates from the data collected on the students' answer folders. These data are reviewed by the school districts prior to reporting, allowing them to correct any errors.

Following is an explanation of how to interpret the categories of students presented in the report. "Total students" refer to all students tested. "General Education" excludes students coded as special education OR limited English proficient (LEP) on their answer folders. "Special Education" (SE) includes students coded as SE. "Limited English Proficient" includes students coded as LEP. The performance data only include students who received valid scale scores. Students whose answer folders were voided were excluded. Because each content area is independent, students may receive a scale score in one content area, but not in others.

Highlights from the Performance by Demographic Groups Report – State

The GEPA was administered between March 8 and March 11, 2004. The test was administered to 110,270 students. Of these, 108,427 had valid scale scores in Language Arts Literacy, 108,965 had valid scale scores in Mathematics and 108,841 students had valid scale scores in science.

For **Total Students**, 28.3% scored Partially Proficient, 66.3% Proficient; and 5.5% Advanced Proficient in Language Arts Literacy. In Mathematics, 38.3% were Partially Proficient, 41.7% Proficient and 20% Advanced Proficient. In Science, 25.3% were Partially Proficient, 53.6% Proficient and 21.1% Advanced Proficient. The mean scale score was 211.9 in Language Arts Literacy, 212.6 in Mathematics and 222.2 in Science.

For **Special Education (SE) students**, 72.3% were Partially Proficient, 27.4% were Proficient and 0.2% Advanced Proficient in the Language Arts Literacy. In Mathematics, 79.2% scored Proficient, 18.4% were Proficient and 2.4% were Advanced Proficient. In Science, 55.9% were Partially Proficient, 39.3% were Proficient and 4.8% Advanced Proficient. The mean scale score was 181.4 in Language Arts Literacy, 180.1 in Mathematics and 199 in Science.

For **Limited English Proficient Students**, 82.5% were Partially Proficient, 17.3% were Proficient and 0.2% were Advanced Proficient in the Language Arts Literacy. In Mathematics, 76.5% scored Partially Proficient, 19.9% were Proficient and 4.6% were Advanced Proficient. In Science, 73.9% were Partially Proficient, 24.7% were Proficient and 1.4% were Advanced Proficient. The mean scale score was 171 in Language Arts Literacy, 182.4 in Mathematics and 188.2 in Science.

As far as **Gender** is concerned, in the Language Arts Literacy, 22% of females were Partially Proficient, 70.1% were Proficient, and 8% were Advanced Proficient compared to 34.2%, 62.7%, and 3.1% of males scoring Partially Proficient, Proficient, and Advanced Proficient respectively. In Mathematics, 38.8% of females were Partially Proficient, 42.8% were Proficient, and 18.4% were Advanced Proficient compared to 37.8%, 40.6%, and 21.6% of males scoring Partially Proficient, Proficient and Advanced Proficient respectively. In Science, 27.7% of females were Partially Proficient, 55.3% were Proficient, and 17% were Advanced Proficient compared to 22.9%, 52%, and 25% of males scoring Partially Proficient, Proficient, and Advanced Proficient respectively. The mean scale score was 217.6 in Language Arts Literacy, 211.7 in Mathematics and 219.1 in Science for females and 206.4, 213.4 and 225.1 for males.

Of different **Ethnicities**, the percentages of Proficient and Advanced Proficient ranged from 85.8% Asian students to 46.5% for Black students in Language Arts Literacy. In Mathematics, the percentages of Proficient and Advanced Proficient students ranged from 82.9 for Asian students to 30.3% for Black students. In Science, Proficient and Advanced Proficient percentages ranged from 86.9% for White students to 47.9% for Black students.

For **Economically Disadvantaged** students, 53.4% scored Proficient, 45.7% Proficient and 0.9% Advanced Proficient in Language Arts Literacy compared to 19.3%, 73.6%, and 7.1% of Non-Economically Disadvantaged students scoring Partially Proficient, Proficient and Advanced Proficient respectively. In Mathematics, 63.9% of Economically Disadvantaged students scored Partially Proficient, 30.2% Proficient and 5.9% Advanced Proficient compared to 29.1%, 45.8%, and 25.1% of Non-Economically Disadvantaged students in similar proficiency levels. In Science, 49.9% of Economically Disadvantaged students scored Partially Proficient, 44.7% scored Proficient, and 5.4% scored Advanced Proficient compared to 16.4%, 56.8%, and 26.8% of Non-Economically Disadvantaged students in the similar proficiency levels respectively. The mean scale score was 193.9 in Language Arts Literacy, 191.7 in Mathematics and 202.4 in Science for Economically Disadvantaged students compared to 218.2, 220 and 229.2 for Non-Economically Disadvantaged students.

Reporting Rules for State Summary Data File

The accompanying state summary data file contains the same type of information shown on the Cycle II Statewide Performance by Demographic Groups Report for by schools and districts. In order to safeguard confidentiality, certain information is suppressed in the file according to the following reporting rules:

- Data are not reported where the number of students with valid scale scores for a particular group is less than 11.

- Data are not reported where demographic groups are mutually exclusive (e.g., gender) and there are one or two students with a valid scale score in one of the groups (e.g., male).
- Data are not reported when it is otherwise possible to identify individual students' performance.